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OPAQUE AND TRANSLUCENT ENAMELS.

II.

LIMOGES enamels have long been reckoned among the treasures of collectors, and in the revival of the decorative arts of late years no attempts have been more successful than those of the French to reproduce the

charming translucent enamelled paintings on copper in the old Limoges style. Some efforts have been made to establish the art in this country, but without success.

There are specimens of common enamel work executed in New York by Swiss artisans for cheap jewelry; but the artistic Limoges enamels introduced into first class American jewelry are all imported.

One of the most famous of the manufacturers of this ware in France—and the art is essentially a French one—is Paul Soyez, a notable example of whose work we illustrate herewith, by permission of Messrs. Watson & Co. This piece, which was exhibited in the Salon last year, is remarkable both for its extraordinary size—the dimensions of the plate itself without the frame being 16 by 16½ inches—the brilliancy of its coloring, and the general excellence of its execution. It is signed “Soyez,” but that gentleman of course is no more the artist than Deck is of his faïence plaques. One of the best designers in the factory is M. R. Piguët, a young Frenchman who used to be well known in New York artistic circles. Another is M. Pottier, who has made many clever copies of the most celebrated works of the old Limoges enamellers. M. Dalpayrat, a well-known painter on enamels and ceramic vases, contributed much to the early reputation of Soyez’s house. He is now in business for himself at Limoges where he is a professor at the Municipal School of Design. The exhibit of his firm (Dalpayrat & Lot) at the Paris Exposition in 1878 attracted much attention, espe-

cially their hollow work, covered with an aventurine or gold enamel. Some of their enamels were enriched with plates of burnished silver and of gold, such as leaves, branches, birds, the moon, or the sun. When these are covered with enamels of the proper tint and transparency, as, for example, blue or green, the silver shows through, giving a beautiful effect. Charlot fils and Robillard fils are also well-known manufacturers; the former designing chiefly for jewelry, and the latter making a specialty of imitations and reproductions.

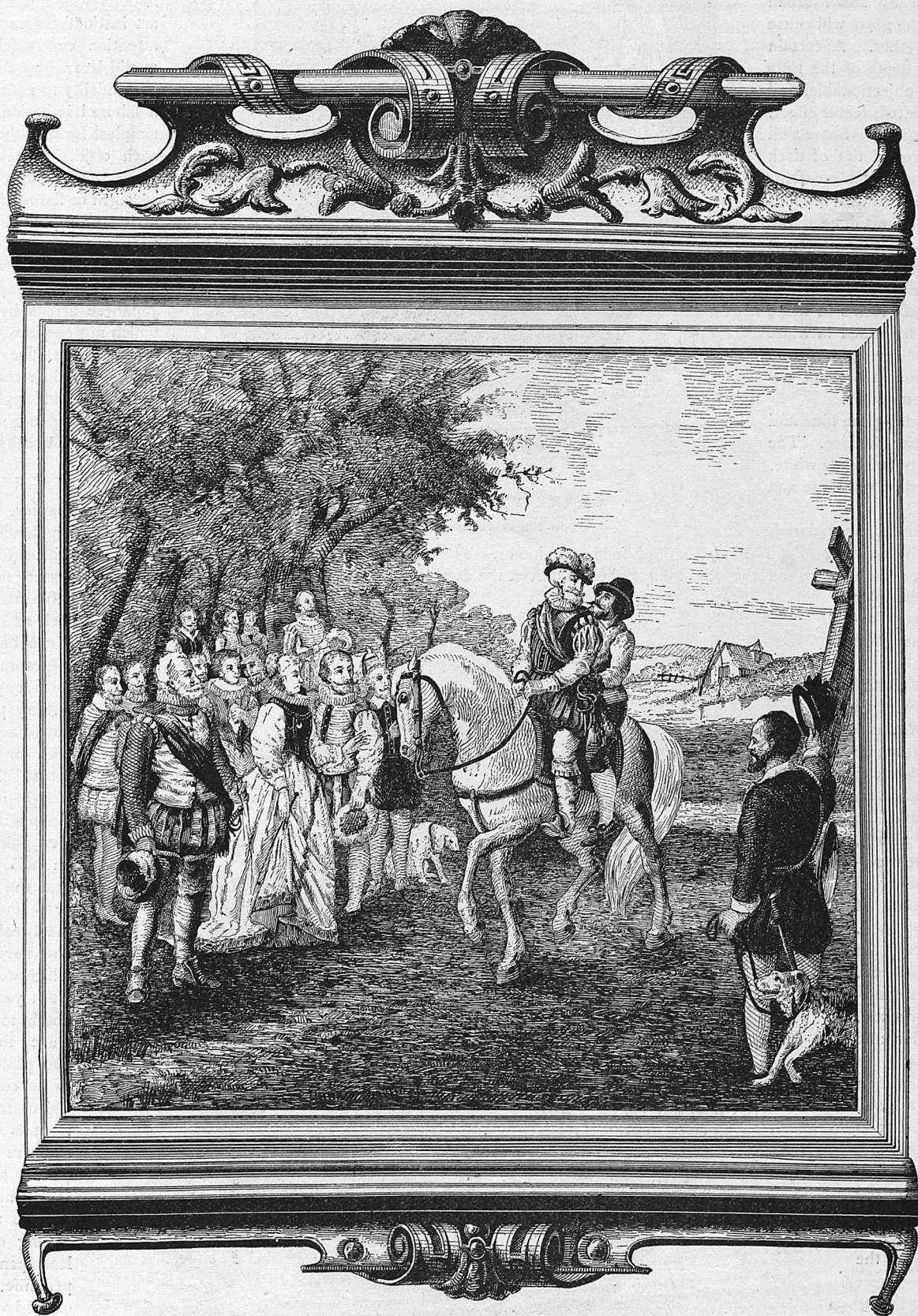
IV. of France and the peasant, is doubtless familiar to many of our readers. As the king was riding by, he was accosted by a peasant who, not knowing him, asked him if he could tell him which way the king would pass on his way to the chase. “Jump up behind me, my friend,” was the reply, “and I will show him to you; for I am going to the hunt myself.” “How shall I know him?” said the peasant. “That’s easy enough,” replied the good-natured monarch; “he will be the only man in the party who will have his head covered.”

The two jogged along until they came to the entrance of the wood where the courtiers were assembled for the hunt. The noblemen immediately doffed their hats. “Why,” exclaimed the peasant, “this is very odd! Every one has uncovered except you and I. Then one of us two must be the king!”

Among other important examples of Soyez’s enamels, Watson & Co. have a remarkable mirror frame (6½ feet by 3½ feet) of enamelled plates or panels, each about 8 inches wide, in the style of Francis II. This was shown at the Paris Exposition, together with a clock with ebony case inlaid with enamelled plates, and two enamelled candlesticks in the style of Henry II.

Enamel painting has the great recommendation of being perfectly indestructible. Specimens of this art applied to pottery, the enamel tints of which are precisely similar to the colors now produced by the enameller, may be seen without change of hue on Egyptian relics 3000 years old. The difficulty of handling the brush in enamel painting is great; but a far greater technical difficulty is that of calculating the exact effect of the process of firing the enamel, in altering the hues of the several applications of color.

Moreover, the enamel painter’s list of pigments is limited to those prepared from metallic oxides, and many metals are perfectly useless on account of the high degree of heat to which enamel paintings are subjected. Modern science, however, has done much to supply this deficiency.



“HENRY IV. AND THE PEASANT.” LARGE ENAMEL PAINTING. BY SOYEZ.

FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF WATSON & CO., NEW YORK.

To return to M. Soyez, who is surpassed by none in the production of original works in Limoges enamel, we find in the piece selected for illustrating a more elaborate composition than is usually attempted in enamel pictorial art. The subject, the story of Henry

The colors are mixed with oil of spike or lavender, or with spirits of turpentine. These essential oils volatilize rapidly under the effect of heat, but the fixed oils would cause the enamel to blister. The ordinary brushes of the painter in water colors are used.

The old Italian school of enamel painting in many cases approximates closely to the French of the same period. One of the finest examples of the former known is the sixteenth century casket, with gilt bronze mountings, belonging to the Casa Reale of Turin, illustrated herewith. It was shown at the Milan exhibition not long ago. The reredos from the Beurdeley collection is by the famous Leonard Limosin, of whom we shall have occasion to say more by and by, when the subject of old French painted enamels will be discussed more at length, and illustrated by historic examples from the best public and private collections.

PRICES OF OLD PORCELAIN.

OLD Sèvres ware seems never to fail to bring large prices at the London auction rooms. At Phillips' rooms recently a very simple Sèvres cup and saucer, sparsely decorated in slight wreaths of flowers on white ground, a by no means effective but a perfectly genuine specimen, brought £7 10s.; and a couple of cups and saucers considerably later, but richer in color (the ground being gros bleu with medallions of flowers) £4 15s. and £6 10s. respectively. A handsome incense-burner of cloisonné enamel, with fish handles and a cover of pierced gilt metal work, 24 inches high, brought £26; and the following lot, a fair specimen of self-colored oriental turquoise, 27 inches high, mounted in metal in the style of Louis XV., but evidently of much later workmanship, realized £11 11s. One lot, a handsome jar of cloisonné enamel, rich in color and of good shape, 29 inches high, brought £37 16s. A pair of little vases of old Sèvres of trumpet or beaker form, with two handles, about 5½ inches high, more like elongated cups, the ground being rose du Barri, œil de perdrix, with medallions on each side of the most delicately painted cattle scenes, were bought by the dealer, Litchfield, for £40. The next lot, a trembleuse cup, cover and saucer of rose du Barri ground with medallions painted in birds, was bought by Mr. Donaldson for £48. [A

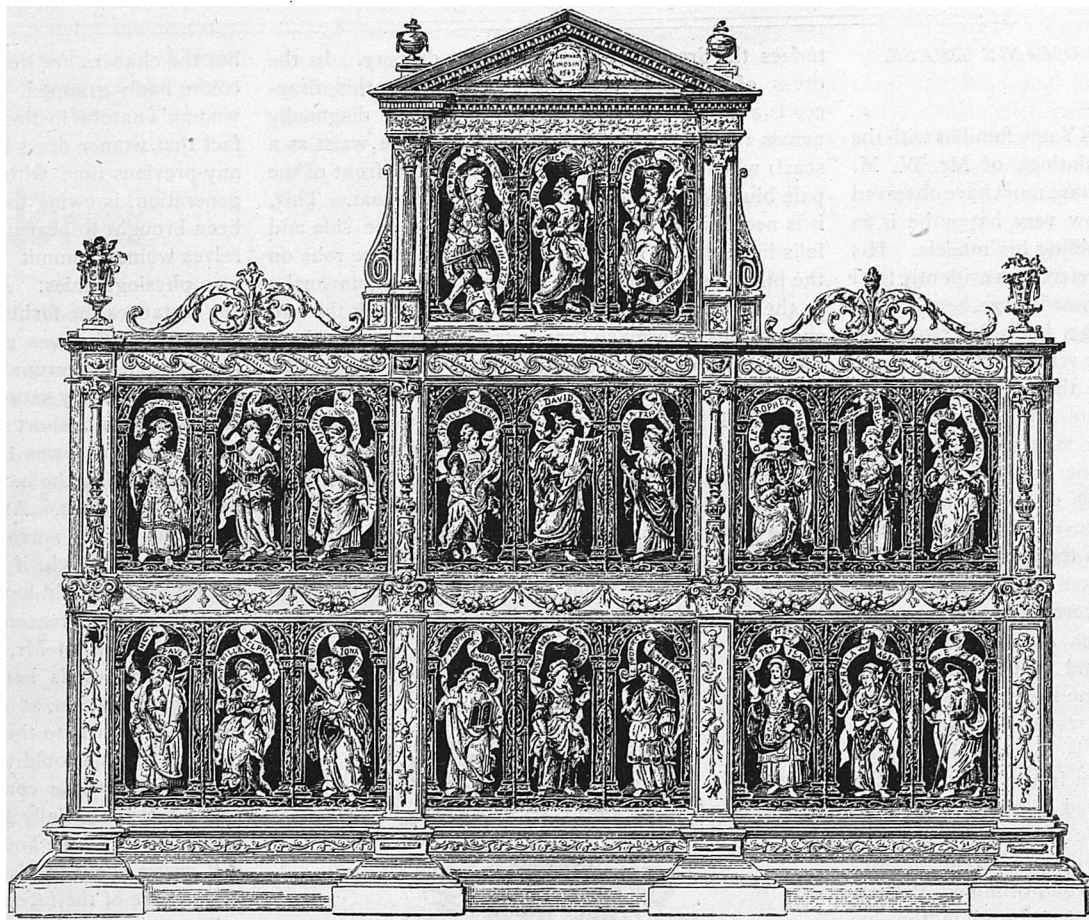
trembleuse cup and saucer, be it said to the uninitiated, means a cup in a socketed saucer, a kind of well in the centre, into which the lower part of the cup sinks, and so prevents the invalid from spilling the contents. They were originally designed for queens or great ladies to take cordials when confined to their beds.]

followed by several extracts from sale catalogues of the Chelsea-Derby factory after the transfer of the Chelsea models to Duesbury's Derby works in the following eight or nine years; they conclude with the sale of Bristol porcelain, Feb. 28, 1780, and two days following. It is instructive to compare with

present prices those obtained in these early days of porcelain manufacture in England. The figure of Mrs. Ryot as "Kitty Clive," sold five or six years ago for £31, fetched 11s. only at its first auction; and, moreover, the doubt as to its being Bow or Chelsea is satisfactorily solved by its being placed by the manufacturers in the Chelsea catalogue. A Chelsea tureen formed as a rabbit, such as has recently brought £30 to £40, sold for £2 10s.

ONE of the many swindles on the public at London auction rooms is thus described by The Artist: "The proprietor of the goods to be sold, or his representative, stands close to the rostrum; and, like the 'expert' at the Rue Drouot, starts many of the lots put up with a given price; and to him the auctioneer invariably looks for a sign before bringing down the hammer. So far all is fair enough; the sale is not advertised as unreserved, and the owner is there to

protect himself personally, instead of instructing the auctioneer as to his reserves. But in many cases it is patent that the commissions which ladies and gentlemen in misplaced confidence give to the brokers who make these rooms their headquarters, are communicated to the owner of the goods, and an arrangement made as to division of profit between owner and commission broker. The names too of well-known dealers who are absent are used to give confidence. Thus lot 100 is bid for by members of a fraternity who have their 'instructions,' and knocked down to Durlacher, Litchfield, Rhodes, and so on, though in reality bought in. Lot 101, similar article, is then put up, and the unwary visitor feels inclined to bid. Lots too are purchased before the sale by certain dealers, and an arrangement made for them to remain in the sale as catalogued, the buyer protecting his own interests by bidding against any one he thinks likely to give a higher price." Such tricks may not be altogether unknown at New York auctions.



SIXTEENTH CENTURY RETABLE PAINTED IN ENAMEL. BY LEONARD LIMOSIN.

IN THE COLLECTION OF M. BEURDELEY.



SIXTEENTH CENTURY ENAMEL CASKET MOUNTED IN GILDED BRONZE.

BELONGING TO THE CASA REALE OF TURIN.

some valuable extracts from Christie's catalogues of many years ago. The extracts commence with the sale of Chelsea china, on the retirement of Nicholas Sprimont, Feb. 14, 1770, and two following days,